

New public management and professionals in the public sector. What new patterns beyond opposition.

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Debate

New public management and professionals in the public sector.
What new patterns beyond opposition?

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Abstract

The proliferation of reforms in public administration based on the principles and instruments of the "New Public Management" (NPM) have triggered protest from and collective action by many professional groups in various sectors (healthcare, education, justice, social work, research) and raised questions about the future of professionals working in the public service, particularly as concerns their autonomy. However, after analyzing the situation, it seems that the opposition between NPM and certain professional groups is not the last word in the debate. Should changes be seen as the decline of professional groups and of their autonomy or as a transformation of professional models, an overhaul of professionalism, etc.? Such questions, which current events in France and Europe have brought to the fore, are food for ongoing sociological

thought. They are broached here empirically, from the field, applying varied levels of analysis and research. The contributors to this dossier explore the different forms of tension existing between professional groups and NPM.



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Keywords

New public management; Professional groups; Professions; Occupational autonomy; Reform of the public administration; Professional bureaucracies; Professionalism; France

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† Translation: Gabrielle Varro (chapters 1–5).

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